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PP RUEHAG RUEHAST RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHDBU RUEHDF RUEHIK RUEHLH RUEHLN
RUEHLZ RUEHNEH RUEHPW RUEHROV RUEHSK RUEHSR RUEHVK RUEHYG

DE RUEHAH #0423/01 0931216

ZNR UUUUU ZZH

P 031216Z APR 09

FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2591

INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 5031

RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 2784

RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 2649

RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY 3275

RHMFUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY

RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC PRIORITY

RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ASHGABAT 000423

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

SCA/CEN; EEB

PLEASE PASS TO USTDA DAN STEIN

ENERGY FOR EKIMOFF/THOMPSON

COMMERCE FOR HUEPER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [EINV](#) [TX](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: IN TURKMENBASHY, IT'S ALL ABOUT
AVAZA

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The Caspian port city of Turkmenbashy is quickly being overshadowed by the construction work underway at the nearby Avaza National Tourist Zone, where the President is pressuring contractors and ministries alike to get the work done in time for mid-June ceremonies. The city of Turkmenbashy itself is not seeing the same level of attention in terms of refurbishment, but some of its citizens will be moving to new housing planned in the next few years. The most near-term benefits city residents can expect are some fresh employment opportunities at the new Avaza facilities, if this tourist zone draws clientele. END SUMMARY.

"TURKMENBASHY--DOORWAY TO CENTRAL ASIA"

2. (SBU) Poloff met April 1 with Mayor of Turkmenbashy city Ashirniyaz Pomanov to learn about recent developments in and around the city. Pomanov noted that the biggest news in recent days had been the March 20 Cabinet of Ministers meeting, which the President held here in Turkmenbashy. Pomanov said the city's residents were most encouraged to hear about the President's order to build new, white marble elite apartments for some 20,000 of the city's residents. (NOTE: Turkmenbashy has about 67,000 residents, nearly all of whom live in decrepit housing. END NOTE.) Most of the existing housing in the city was built in the 1960s or earlier, and is in very poor condition. The new housing is to be built next to a new international airport that Turkish firm Polimeks is building north of the city. The airport, he said, is to be completed by October 2009, and will be capable of handling 800 passengers per hour. It will also have cargo handling facilities. "Turkmenbashy," he said, "will be the doorway to Central Asia."

TURKISH FIRMS MAKING THE AVAZA DREAM A REALITY

3. (SBU) He then transitioned to the work underway at the

President's pet project at Avaza. He said that many countries were now investing in the project, including Turkey, France, Iran and Russia with the construction of hotels, recreation facilities, sanatoria, and the like. Pomanov noted that on June 15, there would be major ceremonies and events at Avaza to cut the ribbon on at least four new hotels and sanatoria that would be finished before then. This included a four-star hotel being built by the Turkish firm Ickale for the Oil and Gas Construction Concern, Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Energy and Industry sanatoria being built by the Turkish Sehil company, a sanatorium for the Ministry of Railway Transport being built by the Turkish firm Delta, and a sanatorium for the Central Bank of Turkmenistan being built by Polimeks. (NOTE: Poloff noted that one of the facilities appears near completion. There are three other buildings that have framework up. Additionally, Polimeks has now established a rather significantly-sized residential compound for its people, located just a few blocks away from the old airport. END NOTE.)

14. (SBU) He said the new gas turbine power station that Lotus Enerji is building will be operational by May 2010, providing a new source of power for the National Tourism Zone. (NOTE: Poloff observed that Turkish contractors Polimeks and Ickale have also completed the grading work for the 7-kilometer artificial river that is to course through the Avaza complex. The companies are just now beginning to lay complex concrete footings for the walls of the canal, likely necessary for the sandy topography of Avaza. The Turkmenbashi oil refinery, curiously, is the customer for

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this project. END NOTE.)

15. (SBU) COMMENT: It seems that development plans are moving forward aggressively for the Avaza Tourist Zone, and the city of Turkmenbashi itself appears to be an afterthought. Still, for this relatively small town, the opening of these new facilities in Avaza could provide a modest number of new employment opportunities that would be longer term than those derived from construction. However, even this will depend on the extent to which these new facilities draw clientele. END COMMENT.
MILES